

# THE DUAL LOGIC OF HERITAGE IN THE FIELD OF ARCHITECTURE

## *La lógica dual del patrimonio en el campo de la arquitectura*

Joana Capela (1), Vítor Murtinho (2)

(1) Department of Architecture, Faculty of Sciences and Technology of University of Coimbra. Edifício Colégio das Artes, Largo D. Dinis, 3000-143 Coimbra, Portugal; joanacapela@hotmail.com

(2) Department of Architecture, Faculty of Sciences and Technology of University of Coimbra Edifício Colégio das Artes, Largo D. Dinis, 3000-143 Coimbra, Portugal; vmurtinho@uc.pt

### ABSTRACT

In the field of architecture, a patrimonial nomination marks an explicit context for urban intervention, from the conceptual level till the project. In spite of the fact that heritage plays an important role in some strategic fields of contemporary life, such as the economic and social fields, it is also still a controversial issue.

The main dichotomist position was reached in the early 30's of the 20th century, by the two *Athens Charters*, in which architects discuss the field of heritage and its importance for contemporary life, leading to conflicting views. On the one hand, we have a group that defends that the perspective of heritage is an ineffective way to confront urban growth, and, on the other hand, there are those who assume heritage as a strategic opportunity for sustainably maintaining urban development. However, even the former, mostly influenced by modern architecture and Le Corbusier's rationale, embrace the new reality and react differently to heritage. After all, protecting and conserving modern architecture is to preserve what will achieve heritage status in the future.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss how a patrimonial nomination could be recognized and accepted as one more way to improve a city's development and particularly its quality of life by those who deal with urban space projects and management.

This study highlights the link between the *University of Coimbra – Alta and Sofia* World Heritage Application process' options with strategic projects and plans for the *University City of Coimbra*, by several architects. It is assumed that Coimbra had its own *Le Corbusier's Plan Voisin* in the middle of 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, all this controversial urban intervention was claimed as *Outstanding Universal Value* and Coimbra's World Heritage Application achieved the hoped-for result, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June of 2013, the *University of Coimbra – Alta and Sofia* was awarded

the World Heritage title by UNESCO. In this case, thinking about the architects' perspectives and projects could be one more opportunity to rethink the city that we want for the future, supposing that it will be better than the present one.

**Key words:** UNESCO's Coimbra World Heritage Application, architects, University City of Coimbra, architecture, Athens Charters, Outstanding Universal Value.

## RESUMEN

*En el campo de la arquitectura, ser Patrimonio Mundial marca un contexto explícito de intervención urbana, desde el nivel conceptual hasta el proyecto. A pesar de que el patrimonio desempeña un papel importante en algunos campos estratégicos de la vida contemporánea, tales como las esferas económica y sociales, es todavía una cuestión controvertida. La principal dicotomía fue alcanzada en los años 30 del siglo XX, por las dos Tratados de Atenas, en el que arquitectos discuten el ámbito del patrimonio y su importancia para la vida contemporánea, conduciendo a opiniones encontradas. Por un lado, tenemos un grupo que defiende que la perspectiva del patrimonio como una manera ineficaz para hacer frente al crecimiento urbano, y, por otro lado, hay quienes asumen el patrimonio como una oportunidad estratégica para el mantenimiento sostenible de desarrollo urbano. Sin embargo, incluso los primeros, sobre todo influenciados por la arquitectura moderna y fundamentos de Le Corbusier, aceptan la nueva realidad y reaccionan de manera diferente al patrimonio. Después de todo, protección y conservación de la arquitectura moderna es preservar lo que será patrimonio en el futuro.*

*El objetivo de este trabajo es discutir cómo una nominación patrimonial podría ser reconocida y aceptada como una forma más de mejorar el desarrollo de la ciudad y particularmente su calidad de vida por aquellos que se ocupan de ese espacio urbano y sus proyectos de gestión.*

*Este estudio pone de relieve el vínculo entre la Universidad de Coimbra – opciones de proceso de Alta y aplicación de herencia del mundo de Sofía con planes y proyectos estratégicos para la ciudad universitaria de Coimbra, por varios arquitectos. Se supone que Coimbra tenía su propio Le Corbusier Plan Voisin a mediados siglo XX. Sin embargo, toda esta polémica intervención urbana fue reivindicada como un valor Universal excepcional y la aplicación al patrimonio de Coimbra había logrado el resultado esperado: el 22 de junio de 2013, la Universidad de Coimbra – Alta y Sofía fue reconocida con el título de patrimonio de mundial por la UNESCO. En este caso, pensar en perspectivas y proyectos de los arquitectos puede ser una oportunidad más para repensar la ciudad que queremos para el futuro, y que sea mejor que el presente.*

**Palabras clave:** Candidatura de Coimbra a Patrimonio Mundial de la UNESCO, arquitectos, Ciudad Universitaria de Coimbra, arquitectura, Carta de Atenas, Valor Excepcional Universal.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Heritage plays several roles in contemporary communities, as Labadi and Long pointed out concerning the conservation process and this makes it possible “to place marketing strategies, not only to attract tourists but also to help in the re-creation of local identities” (eds. Labadi & Long 2010, p. 7). Further, the Council of the European Union have claimed that the city and its image are a European legacy and a profitable resource, which should be considered in many fields of contemporary life and taken into consideration in definitions of sustainable and development policies for the future (2014).

In the field of architecture, a patrimonial nomination marks an explicit context for urban intervention, from the conceptual level, that is the project, till the reality, the existent city. In spite of the fact that heritage is an important element in some strategic fields of contemporary life, such as the economic and social fields, it is also still a controversial issue. In that sense, it is pertinent to deal with the perspectives and understandings of those who made an important contribution to the designation “Patrimony”, the architects and their influences.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss how a patrimonial nomination could be recognized and accepted as one more way to improve a city’s development, particularly the quality of the lives of those who have to experience urban space projects in their daily lives and those who manage them like architects.

The two main influences on general approaches to city planning in architecture are considered, when building in an old city or a new. It means that the architects’ influences are likely to be important for the architects views and understandings of a city and consequently when defining its urban plans and projects.

This work is intended to make a contribution to understanding the different approaches to urban planning at the University of Coimbra (UC), particularly at the *Alta University*, since the development of the two *Athens Charters* in the early 30s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which have turned out to be very important for the recent history of urban planning and architecture. The last major transformation of Coimbra’s urban morphology occurred with the *Estado Novo*’s interventions a decade after the Charters’ development. This seems to be relevant because that area of Coimbra has been part of the World Heritage List, since 2013, and its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) was justified on its World Heritage Application (WHA) for its evolutionary aspect with influence on history in the west and associated with the development and transmission of cultural and educational aspects, (ed. Lopes 2012). However, after its *tabula rasa* approach in the 40s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was stated that one of its main goals was to be recognised “as a reference in the field of intervention and property safeguard” (ed. Lopes 2012-ES, p. 6). This goal could be read as a mature acceptance of the recent history “in fact, to apply a living and in use property forces the adoption of

*some fragilities that result from the actions of transformation and adjustment imposed by political, social, economical and cultural conditions, as a consequence of time”* (ed. Lopes 2012-ES, p. 7).

## 2. THE TWO ATHENS CHARTERS

One of main aspirations for the technological advances occurring since the industrial revolution was the transformation of space-time reality; the introduction of steam engines changed the way of life and, consequently, the paradigms of urban planning. On the one hand, cities gained new centres based on new facilities<sup>1</sup>, usually public, and subsequently there was a need to create legal protocols to implement the urban rules, which would benefit the whole city. On the other hand, cities' urban landscapes changed too, in the majority of cases without a plan, because the accumulation of space for urban development made it possible to acquire land. Thus, the pinnacles of cathedrals gave place to factory chimneys.

These new elements in the urban landscape promoted a new experience of urban space, as there was a need to construct buildings representative of the installed powers of the city, such as the rulers, authorities or services, thus altering Europe's pre-existing urban dynamics. It has not always been easy to conciliate the different phases of urban composition because of the conflict between the installation of new facilities and the already existing urban heritage. This has created some scars and mismatches in terms of urban spatial connections. It was thought that the new urban centres would be the solution to the problems of urban and social decadence that had started during the period of urban decentralization, during which city centres had been abandoned for long periods.

Architecture began to be seen and used as an instrument of power to satisfy the demands and needs of society and communities efficiently, as well as a vital force to change the world into a new one. These were the aspirations of a popular culture, which hoped to rule its own destiny, by means of a systematic democratisation of services, from education to the arts. However, the main impediment to this dream was the growing power of totalitarian regimes in the first decades of the 20th century<sup>2</sup>, and many architects considered that emigration to the United States of America was the only answer to this loss of the dream of democracy.

---

<sup>1</sup> The population density of European cities grew considerably. Topics like safety, order and public health demanded an effective response to the various problems associated with a city's growth inside its urban limits; therefore building infrastructures like police and fire stations, prisons, hospitals and foster homes became imperative, just as implementing planning regulations did too.

<sup>2</sup> In spite of the result based on the *mythical* travels, architects like Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius and Mies Van Der Rohe contributed to the development of the Modern Movement theory.

The break with *Beaux-Arts* traditions opened a way for the Modern Movement (MM) to introduce some possible solutions for all those problems, by assuming that a *progressive* vision of a city should be considered. This adopted the new city as a paradigm of *the new man and the new world*. However, the real theory and practical reality concerning urban projects, in the first decades of the 20th century and promoted since the industrial revolution, was just a reinvention of the past with new languages, materials and expressions<sup>5</sup>.

Simultaneously to these new assumptions about the construction of cities, a contrasting perspective to the Modern Movement's theory of an ideal programme for cities, developed. This was a vision of continuity that defined the city as a whole and took into consideration all of its pre-existing forms. It treated them as a legacy to protect and leave behind for the following generations and to constitute a fundamental element for new urban projects.

The principles and actions taken to preserve a city's cultural heritage, its monuments and buildings of public interest became an approach that "*was essentially a form of opposition to the ongoing modernisation and destruction*" (Bandarin & Oers 2012, p. 6) developed since the French Revolution. The *culturalists* or this *intellectual movement*, as a result, considered that a city's cultural heritage should be part of a common European heritage. This intellectual movement considered that the image of a city's spatial limit was

---

3 Le Corbusier, the maximum exponent of the Modern Movement, assumed a growing divergence from the academic world, which defended *Beaux-Arts* and of the neoclassical traditional forms. This disagreement permitted the development of a solution for the exponential growth of the modern industrialized world, and laid the foundations for the modern movement theory. The new ideal for the city, which denied the academic style of copying the past for the existent city, was essentially the *tabula rasa* approach and was the only solution capable of meeting the social, hygienic and moral requirements of a European city. In fact, awareness that wartime was an opportunity to improve urban planning began to emerge in some architectural circles influenced by Le Corbusier. The master of the MM demanded courage to promote the renovation of European cities: "... Or, technique et conscience sont les deux leviers d'architecture, sur quoi s'appuie l'art de bâtir. On vit se fissurer, s'effondrer même, des valeurs séculaires, millénaires. Les vitesses mécaniques répandaient en tous points du territoire une nouvelle information. (...) Tout s'est accompli, porté aux limites du pire – catastrophe consommée. (...) L'architecture se meurt, une autre naît!" (Le Corbusier 1957, p. 133).

4 "*L'urbanisme progressiste*" like Choay classified (1965, p. 207).

5 Le Corbusier stated that the past was its own master to justify the reinterpretation of architectural form and to refuse the form of architecture as a copy.

6 Gustavo Giovannoni developed Boito's theory and, for the first time, there was a view of the city as a whole (Jokilehto 2005); he rejected the idea of a "historic centre", as a hermetic place protected from further urban influence; on the contrary, the whole city should be developed and considered as an integrated system of spaces and linked places, in spite of considering the segregated areas problematic (Aguilar 2009).

7 "*L'urbanisme culturaliste*" like Choay classified (1965, p. 257).

8 Like Bandarin and Oers argued (2012, p. 17) that this *intellectual movement* was created "*among architects, planners and social thinkers of the time*" (2012, p. 14).

the greatest cultural-identity-spatial contribution that Europe had given to the world, while the principles of the MM, defended the contrary (Bandarin & Oers 2012). For centuries, this had been at the centre of the discussion and considering the growing support for the MM's theories, it was in risk of being lost and blocked. In this context, it started to be claimed that urban heritage was an evaluative concept and a link between the past, present and future generations. The main dichotomist position was reached in the early 30s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the two *Athens Charters*, in which architects discuss the field of heritage and its importance for contemporary life, leading to the conflicting views.

The first *Athens Charter* was drawn up in the proceedings of the *1st International Conference of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments*, in 1931, where some theories and experiences, particularly the Italian, for example Gustavo Giovannoni's, were debated. European governments took the lead in the reconstruction of historical urban cities, due to the considerable levels of destruction resulting from the 1st World War. It was necessary to debate how this reconstruction should be done. Those involved in such processes, mostly architects and conservation experts from Europe, reached a consensus about their commitment to policies concerning international heritage.

The second *Athens Charter* was drawn up in the proceedings of the *4th International Conference of Modern Architecture*, in 1933. It is also known as the *Town Planning Charter*, which said that heritage should be taken into consideration if it could contribute to urban development. On the one hand, one group defended heritage as a strategic opportunity for sustainably maintaining urban development, while, on the other hand, there were those who assumed that the perspective of heritage was an ineffective way to deal with urban growth.

This dichotomy influenced several generations of architects all over the world. In spite of the fact that the former, considered *culturalists*, worked with the existent city and its legacies inherited over time, the truth is that modern architecture seems to be more appealing to the so-called "new man in the new world" where the newer ideologies and methodologies in arts and design are taken as a common good. However, even the defenders of the MM theory, mostly influenced by modern architecture and Le Corbusier's rationale, nowadays embrace the new reality and react differently to heritage. After all, protecting and conserving modern architecture is to preserve what will achieve heritage status in the future, like DOCOMOMO<sup>9</sup> does.

---

<sup>9</sup> DOCOMOMO, International Committee for Documentation and Conservation of the Buildings, Sites and Neighbourhoods of the Modern Movement.



### 3. COIMBRA BETWEEN THE TWO ATHENS CHARTERS

Coimbra went through a big transformation of its urban space, in the 40s of the 20th century, but the transformation process had begun some years before that and with a different approach from that which was later adopted. Three years after the first Athens Charter and a year after the second one, the Portuguese government decided to reformulate the “old” University of Coimbra (UC) in 1934. Two architects, Raúl Lino and Luís Benavente, were called in to develop a previous urban plan to stimulate the reform of the UC, this was the basis of the UC's strategies for the future and was published in the National Official Journal<sup>10</sup>. These two architects had worked for several years in Coimbra before and knew its urban context and its daily routines. In that sense, they were aware<sup>11</sup> of both the real situation and the national government's new demand: to restore the university as a national symbol and a transnational reference for the Portuguese colonial territories. Furthermore, the government's main objective was very clear: to draw up an urbanization plan around the existent university facilities and include the area necessary to guarantee its future expansion and to isolate it from the surrounding private buildings<sup>12</sup> (Fig. 1).

Benavente worked on the survey of the university facilities in the upper city, the *Alta Universitária*. Coimbra had been considered the *University City*, per excellence, for centuries, as Correia argued (1946, p.191), due to the role the *Alta Universitária* had played in urban life since the sixteenth century. Even Benavente was taken by this idea and seduced by the historic urban context of the upper town of Coimbra (Franco in ed. IAN-TT 1997, p. 77). Indeed, it was Benavente himself who expressed the principles that should guide the intervention: a valorisation of the university's existent architectonic heritage in harmony with the surrounding buildings. This was to be done by making sure that any restoration work was done carefully and new buildings did not interfere with the historic visual perspectives which had been valued for centuries<sup>14</sup>. Even Oliveira Salazar

---

10 Portaria 04.12.1934, published in the *Diário do Governo*, II<sup>nd</sup> serie — No. 294 — 15.12.1934.

11 There are some authors that discuss the process, emphasising the work of Luís Benavente rather than Raúl Lino in the first Works of the University City of Coimbra's Commission (*Comissão de Obras da Cidade Universitária de Coimbra – COCUC*). Cf. (Correia 1946, p. 192); and the first Commission Report. Even Luís Benavente himself, in his autobiography, does not refer to Lino's contribution to the master plan (Benavente in ed. IAN-TT 1997, pp. 52-53).

12 Portaria 04.12.1934, published in the *Diário do Governo*, II<sup>nd</sup> serie — No. 294 — 15.12.1934.

13 Luís Benavente took part of the executive board of the *Venice Charter* later, in 1964.

14 “(...) o princípio que deve ser seguido, o da beneficiação que conduza a uma harmonia que valorize por completo o qualificado património universitário existente. Sem intrusões que lhe sejam prejudiciais, nem obra nova que com ele não esteja de acordo. Não utilizar espaços onde construções venham prejudicar a perspectiva sobre espécies de valor legadas pelos séculos” (Benavente in ed. IAN-TT 1997, pp.52-53).

(1945, p. XX), the President of the Government, defended those arguments in one of his public speeches, in 1937, affirming that the upper city, the *Alta*, was like a masterpiece inherited from the masters from the past, that should be restored and all the “junk” constructions should be cleared away from the historic buildings. However, this perspective was not accepted by the Minister of Public Works, Duarte Pacheco, who rejected the plan drawn up by the first commission<sup>15</sup> and the plan developed by the second Commission in 1940<sup>16</sup>, also signed by Benavente.



Fig. 1 – The Alta Universitária before the Estado Novo’s urban interventions, 1930s (ed. Lopes 2012-I, p.26). (Photo: Portuguese Aerial Force – FAP).

The architect chosen to lead the project and the UC’s plan in 1941<sup>17</sup> and the *Comissão Administrativa do Plano de Obras da Cidade Universitária de Coimbra* (CAPOCUC), was Cottinelli Telmo, who had been the head architect of the Portuguese World Exhibition in 1940. Architect, composer and film-maker, Cottinelli Telmo was asked to provide a new image and aesthetic composition

15 Nominated by *Portaria* 04.12.1934, published in the *Diário do Governo*, II<sup>nd</sup> serie — No. 294 — 15.12.1934. In the beginnings of 1936, the first Commission finished the report for an urbanization project (Rosmaninho 2006, p. 67).

16 Nominated by *Portaria* 28.08.1939, published in the *Diário do Governo*, II<sup>nd</sup> serie — No. 294 — 06.09.1939. The report was delivered on the 28<sup>th</sup> of February of 1940 (Sarmiento n.d., p. 27).

17 Nominated by Decree-Law no. 31576, published in the *Diário do Governo*, II<sup>nd</sup> serie — No. 241 — 15.10.1941.



what he produced based on geometrical compositions, mostly orthogonal ones, in its conception where architecture was an instrument to achieve the main hoped-for aesthetic result.

Decree-Law no. 31576 published on the 15<sup>th</sup><sub>18</sub> of October 1941, clearly established the main goal of the new Commission : develop the former plans, manage them, verify them and improve the final results. However that was not what happened. Duarte Pacheco and Cottinelli Telmo were immune to the traditional sentimental vision of Coimbra. They had just come from a successful event, the Portuguese World Exhibition, constructed in Belém's riverside area in Lisbon, where their creative expression had revealed the importance of scenery, space, dimension, volume, perspective and symmetry. At that time, the *Alta* of Coimbra was another reality.

Three quarters of the upper town were destroyed in order to obtain the necessary space to construct the new University City (Fig. 2). It was a true *Athens Charter* of 1933 approach, if the architectural values were an expression of the former culture and important for the general interest of the city, they could be preserved (66th principle); but that conservation cannot interfere with the social justice of good living conditions for the population that should be considered first (67th principle), as Le Corbusier had defined (1957, pp. 87- 89).

Well, the value of *Paço das Escolas* was considered high enough not to be destroyed and so it was restored. All the other buildings were considered dispensable, considering the main goal of Cottinelli Telmo's commission and with Duarte Pacheco's approval. Like the theory underlying the *Voisin Plan*<sup>19</sup> for central Paris, developed by Le Corbusier in 1925, the objective was to guarantee space enough to build a new image for the city, progressing towards a new ideal. In this sense, the UC's plan was an application of the discipline of the *Athens Charter* and Le Corbusier's doctrine of *tabula rasa*<sup>20</sup>. It was influenced by the plans of the University Cities of Madrid and Rome and the Plan of Works of the University City of Coimbra imposed its super dimension and volume on the *Alta* area, changing the local proportions of scale and the spatial links between the old university facilities and the old city by the construction of the new buildings and implementation of the new urbanplan.

---

18 There were three commissions: 1934-1937, the 1st Commission; 1939-1940, the 2nd Commission, and; 1941-1975, the CAPOCUC (Rosmaninho 2006).

19 "Le "Plan Voisin" n'a pas la prétention d'apporter la solution exacte au cas du centre de Paris. Mais il peut servir à élever la discussion à un niveau conforme à l'époque et à poser le problème à une saine échelle" (Le Corbusier n.d., p. 273).

20 The *tabula rasa* concept was developed by Le Corbusier to express the ideal way to build a new city upon the ruins of the traditional one, zoning the urban area by distinguishing functions (Le Corbusier 1933).

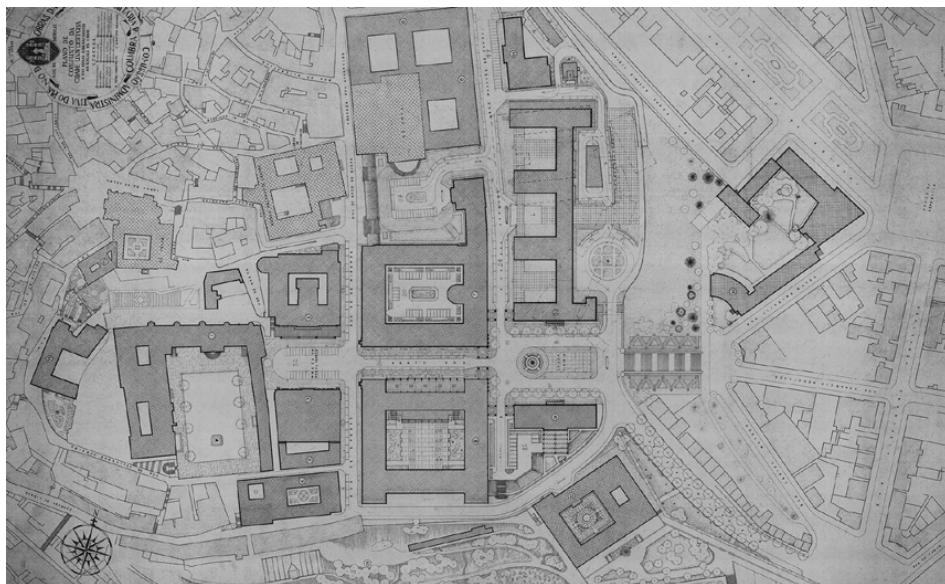


Fig. 2 – CAPOCUC's master plan of the University City, 1949 (ed. Lopes 2012-I, p.92).

The city's morphology and shape had never suffered such a huge transformation since the Pombaline reforms in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The monumentality of the new architecture modified the use of the urban space and most of the housing, services and the residents of the demolished *Alta* area were relocated to new neighbourhoods and newsurroundings.

#### 4. COIMBRA'S WORLD HERITAGE APPLICATION PROCESS

In the early 80s, Coimbra asked for a World Heritage Application (WHA) of its upper city, the remaining area that had survived the *Estado Novo's* interventions. The historical urban landscape, the *Lusa Atenas*, which was an image represented by artists throughout centuries, Coimbra's identity as a refuge, a "*construction in space (...) in the course of long spans of time*" (Lynch 1977, p. 1), had been changed for good.

In spite of the fact that the city had suffered: morphologically (three quarters of the *Alta* had been demolished to build the new university space); sociologically (the social transformation of the upper city's population was related to the migrant movements imposed on those who lived in the demolished areas as they were rehoused in new neighbourhoods of urban expansion) and demographically (the total amount the upper city's population decreased because of the *Estado Novo's* intervention, the imposed expropriation and rehousing processes) (Fig. 3-4). It was a way to demonstrate that what had been left was a memorial and historical

value that should be preserved and legated from the past to the future. However, the result of the intervention under CAPOCUC's Plan, a “*monumental modernism*” as Zevi argued (1973), was not accepted well by the community. Even nowadays, it remains a controversial issue.



Fig. 3-4 – *Alta's demolitions* (AAEC 1991, p.204; p. 43).

For that reason, the architect Donald Insall, during a collaborative visit with the first promoter of the WHA in 1982 (Capela 2013; Capela & Murtinho 2014b), Matilde Sousa Franco, the Directress of Machado de Castro Museum, considered that just as important as the candidate area itself, was its surroundings and its buffer zone too. This was because the *Alta* area had to be considered on two different scales, both the monumental and urban, despite the outstanding value of its many historic buildings, like the *Paço das Escolas*, the Royal Library, the Cathedrals, the St. Jerome and Arts' Colleges and the Machado de Castro Museum.

Following the demands of the former application, the Municipality of Coimbra assumed the task of developing it. Several changes were considered concerning the limits of the property's area and, consequently, the buffer zone and its denomination but the upper city was always included in those applications. The Application for the *Alta* area was rejected several times over the years and for different reasons but the nomination of the area as a WHA was always the main goal. Capela and Murtinho classified this phase as the first of Coimbra's World Heritage process, from 1982 to 1998, for this reason (Capela 2013; Capela & Murtinho 2014b).

It was the University that, in 1995, by rethinking its university facilities in the *Alta* and expanding, with the construction of new facilities for the medical and engineering sciences which re-established a dialogue with the pre-existent city. Architect Gonalo Byrne developed a master plan to rebuild that ancient link with the urban space of the *Alta*. It was necessary to develop strategies to reinstate the lost urban functions, such as residences, services and commerce

within the university area and to redefine the urban space, the urban traffic and parking areas. This meant reconstructing the Univer(sc)ity and reintroducing the city into the *Lusa Atenas university acropolis*.

The University understood its social and leading role, as well as its responsibility, in dealing with the city's aspirations for recognition. From 1998 to 2003, a new phase, in which a reformulation of the property<sup>21</sup> to propose to UNESCO was undertaken by the University. The University developed strategies, did studies and held conferences on the subject and a pre-project for an application process was begun (Capela 2013; Capela & Murtinho 2014b).

The last period of the Coimbra process occurred with the official act to register the UC on the Tentative List of Portuguese Properties for World Heritage, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May 2004, by the Portuguese Commission of UNESCO. Finally, on the 22nd of June 2013, the *University<sup>22</sup> of Coimbra – Alta and Sofia* was awarded the title of World Heritage by UNESCO (Fig. 5).

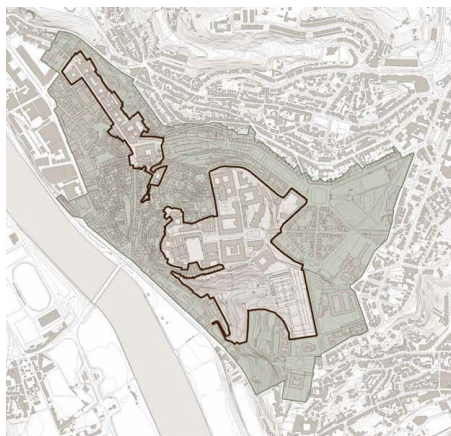


Fig. 5 – The UC-AS World Heritage areas and its protection area. (ed. Lopes 2012-I, p. 224).

## 5. STRATEGIES, PROJECTS AND POLICIES OF THE UC-AS WHA

Coimbra had been connected to some particular aspects of university life since former periods, specially the *Alta Universitária*. The urban reality was an aspect present in university life, the students' houses, the *Repúblicas*, were mixed in with

21 Under the theme *Build the Univer(sc)ity*, three important conferences were held “Os Colégios da Sofia” in 1999, “A Alta de volta” in 2000, “Os segredos do Paço” in 2001 and an International Meeting “CidadeSofia” in 2003, in order to conceive and define the University's value as a true universal heritage. Cf. (Capela 2013).

22 Decision 37 COM 8B.38 adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its 37<sup>th</sup> session of the Convention concerning the protection of the World Heritage by UNESCO, in Phnom Penh – Cambodia, in 2013, document WHC-13/37.COM/20. Cf. (UNESCO-WHC 2013, p. 209).

private housing. Services and commerce interacted with, and were dependent on it and its public cultural and traditional manifestations<sup>23</sup> that had become part of the city's festivities and collective memory. Cultural and traditional usages changed with the transformation of the urban morphology in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by the Portuguese dictatorial regime.

In 2003, with the adoption of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, by UNESCO<sup>24</sup>, all those immaterial aspects of Coimbra could be seen as one more opportunity to distinguish the outstanding value and universal dimension of the University, recognised from Brazil to Asia (ed. Lopes 2012-IV, p. 5).

Various protection and conservation works were done meanwhile, to guarantee that the University's buildings could be used in perfect conditions for university functions.<sup>25</sup> The most recognised work is the conservation work done on the *Via Latina*<sup>25</sup> in the *Paço das Escolas* (Fig. 6), which won the Europa Nostra<sup>26</sup> award in 2009, and a year after that, the University Tower began to be restored<sup>26</sup>.

Some important Portuguese architects were called on to make a contribution to carry out Byrne's master plan. Names like Álvaro Siza Vieira<sup>27</sup>, the Aires Mateus brothers<sup>28</sup>, José Paulo dos Santos<sup>29</sup>, João Mendes Ribeiro<sup>30</sup>, Gonçalo

---

23 The "Canção de Coimbra", its fado version, the serenades, "the main academic ceremonies – the investiture of the Rector, the solemn doctorates and the inauguration of classes – date back (with the necessary adaptations) to the Studium Generale of the Middle Ages and Early Modern period. The procession that takes place during major events is, first and foremost, a demonstration of the power and internal order of the corporation. The professors, who are integrated into the procession according to the hierarchy of the Faculties and the dates in which they obtained their doctorate, wear the doctoral gown and insignia" (ed. Lopes 2012-III, pp. 128-129).

24 The 32nd General Conference of UNESCO took place from the 29th of September to the 17th of October, in Paris. Cf. [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=17716&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=17716&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html), accessed in 21.02.2015.

25 Technical supervision and conservation coordination by Fernando Marques, Engineer (ed. Lopes 2012-VI, pp. 17-51).

26 Technical supervision and conservation coordination by Fernando Marques, Engineer. Architectural coordination by Vítor Mestre (ed. Lopes 2012-VI, pp. 52-73).

27 Architectural coordination of *Casa dos Melos* – Library of the Faculty of Law of the UC (ed. Lopes, 2012-VI, pp. 202-231).

28 Architectural coordination of the *Colégio da Santíssima Trindade* – European Judicial University Court and other departments of the Faculty of Law (ed. Lopes 2012-VI, pp. 184-201).

29 Architectural coordination of *Colégio de N. Sra. da Graça* – *Centro de Estudos Sociais* and *Centro de Documentação 25 de Abril* (ed. Lopes 2012-VI, pp. 274-293).

30 Architectural coordination of the *Laboratório Químico e Museu da Ciência* of UC, with Carlos Antunes and Désirée Pedro (ed. Lopes 2012-VI, pp. 130-161); architectural coordination of the *Casa das Caldeiras* (Boiler House – Course of Art Studies), Faculty of Letters, with Cristina Alves Guedes (ed. Lopes 2012-VI, pp. 162-183); architectural coordination of the renovation of the *Teatro Paulo Quintela* of Faculty of Letters (ed. Lopes 2012-VI, pp. 293-307).



Byrne<sup>31</sup> and others<sup>32</sup> did projects for the UC buildings, with programmes for new extensions in some cases, and restoration and conservation work in others. One purpose was to defend a qualitative approach to architecture and establish a new dynamic “involving opening up to the community and respecting its own history” (ed. Lopes 2012-V, p. 5).



Fig. 6 – Paço das Escolas. (Photo: FG+SG).

A new opportunity to stimulate the urban development and tourism arose with this WHA, and the UC and the city were well aware of it. It was, as Labadi and Long stated, “while heritage protection has never been simply about the past, it seems more than ever to be seen as a strategy for the future” (eds. Labadi & Long 2010, p. 2). This is a responsibility that should encourage the agents of urban management to define the protocols and synergies necessary to achieve sustainable urban development based on heritage and, consequently, its protection.

On the 10th of November 2011, UNESCO’s General Conference adopted the recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) in order to add the tool of an integrated policy to the already established approach of conservation doctrines. UNESCO defines the HUL as “the urban area understood as the result of a historic layering of cultural and natural values and attributes,

31 Architectural coordination of Paço das Escolas (University Courtyard) (ed. Lopes 2012-VI, pp. 106-113); architectural coordination of the Associação Académica de Coimbra (Student Union) building (ed. Lopes 2012-VI, pp. 232-249); architectural coordination of the Centro de Interpretação e Informação of the UC (ed. Lopes 2012-VI, pp. 311-327).

32 Architectural coordination of Colégio de Jesus – Museu da Ciência by Nuno Ribeiro Lopes and conservation and restoration coordination by Mário Carvalhal and Pedro Cordeiro (ed. Lopes 2012-VI, pp. 250-273); architectural coordination of the Biblioteca de Línguas e Literatura of the Faculty of Letters by Cláudia Santos Silva and Hugo Andrade (ed. Lopes 2012-VI, pp. 308-313).

*extending beyond the notion of “historic centre” or “ensemble” to include the broader urban context and its geographical setting”* (2012, p. 52). This means that the HUL is the territorial understanding of the site with its particularities, provided by the layers of interventions done by its users over time. It could reflect the social and cultural practices concerning the urban structure, according to the hierarchy and organization of its sites, and introduce another immaterial dimension to the collective memory constructed concerning the area and transmitted through time<sup>33</sup> (Fig. 7).

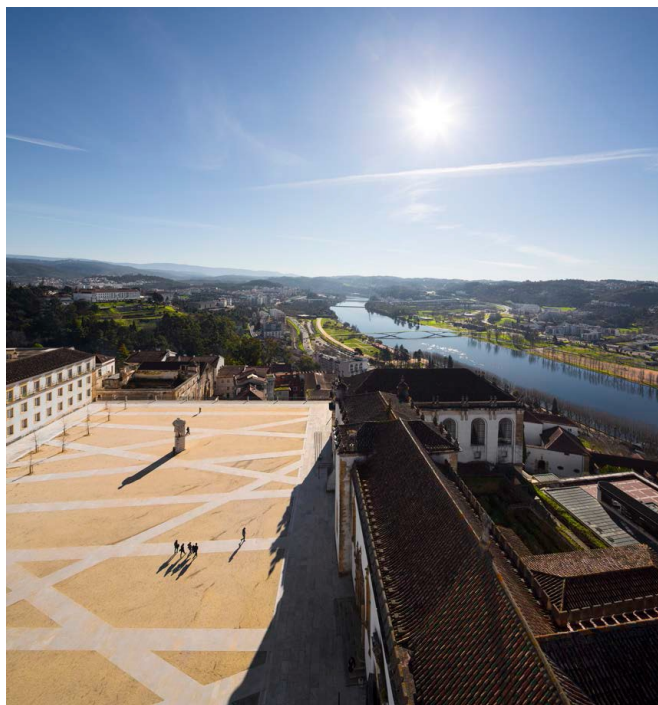


Fig. 7 – View from the UC Tower. (Photo: FG+SG).

Luís Benavente had argued that the “*historic visual perspectives*” were essential for the understanding of the university’s urban environment, in the 1<sup>st</sup> University Commission’s Works, in 1934-1937. Donald Insall had also considered this aspect when he suggested that the area of Coimbra nominated in 1982, should be an extended one<sup>34</sup>, this was what the Municipality later considered to be classified as

33 Cf. (Oers and Roders 2012).

34 The *Alta* area is surrounded by several hills; all the surrounding hill’s top-lines define an extended area around the *Alta* that Insall considered should be related to the *Alta*’s protection zone, according to information provided by Matilde Sousa Franco and her private archive, in 28.11.2014.

the Historic Centre, in 1994. These assumptions seem obvious after taking a walk through Coimbra.

The *Lusa Atenas*, crowned by the University, creates Coimbra's historic urban landscape as if there was a territorial protocol between the University and its historic setting. This iconic landscape is also an important aspect of the authenticity of Coimbra's property. In spite of being considered by Labadi "*as one of the most slippery concepts in heritage conservation*" (Labadi in eds. Labadi & Long 2010, p. 66), it was always the base of the criteria to allow a property onto the World Heritage List.

In the case of Coimbra, the historic evolution of the property is truly an element of its authenticity. The sequence of events' connected throughout time since its original form and function, to its present use after the necessary conservation works, changes and transformations of space in order to respond to new usages and functions, made a fundamental contribution to the area's Outstanding Universal Value. The property's sequential and historical creation process<sup>35</sup> gives more information and knowledge about architecture and the history of its construction than a process of cryopreservation, which is intended to maintain the original. Life is not a static reality and our environment should not be one either. The continuous and constant use of the property highlights its importance to the community that supports it, evokes it and recreates it over and over again (Fig. 8).

Architects<sup>36</sup> know better than anyone else that *people shape spaces and space shapes people*. As the *Executive Summary* of the UC-AS WHA emphasises, the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the UC resides "*in its evolutionary character (...) in which the set, because it represents successive stages, has an importance greater than the sum of its parts*" (ed. Lopes 2012-ES, p. 7). It interacted and related with national and international cultural development over seven centuries and witnessed several significant periods of "*Western Human history, in its space, architectural, technological and landscape dimensions*" (ed. Lopes 2012-ES, p. 6). Byrne's Master Plan is based on this particular *evolutionary* dimension of the University of Coimbra. A new architectural project should not be a *stigma* in a WH Site when done in order to safeguard and protect its heritage. On the contrary, it should focus on its OUV, considering that the university site is an integral part of the *Alta* and the city, and so contribute to rebuilding the lost link between the urban *Alta* and the *Alta Universitária* (Fig. 9-10-11).

<sup>35</sup> Cf. (Rossa 2001; Pimentel 2005).

<sup>36</sup> Reference to Winston Churchill's quote that reveals the importance of architects and architecture for a community's social behaviour and relationships: "*We shape our buildings, thereafter they shape us.*"



*Fig. 8 – Rua Larga. (Photo: UC).*



*Fig. 9-10-11 – Aerial view of the Alta Universitária. (Photos: Filipe Jorge).*

Such a plan must: firstly contribute to the requalification of the urban space; secondly, the conservation of the heritage built; thirdly, the creation of sustainable conditions for the revitalisation of the nominated area and, finally, the promotion of a tourism based on cultural and scientific aspects. The approach adopted under Byrne's Master Plan took into account the UC's privileged territorial setting to enhance the development of a new balanced strategy for the preservation of heritage. It will be possible to give the University City back to the city by concentrating on the revitalisation of a public space to restore the original spatial continuity.



## CONCLUSIONS

This study shows how the different technical perspectives of those who draw up a city's master plans may be so pertinent for the quality of life of those living in the planned areas.

It is possible to reach a possible interpretation of the conflicts and misunderstandings created by the urban transformations in the *Alta* of Coimbra in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In order to reach this, a careful consideration of the various architects' views and influences, the strategic link between the University of Coimbra's options, and the *Alta* and Sofia World Heritage Application process, as well as the strategic projects and plans for the UC in the upper town, is essential.

The conflicting views that architects hold on heritage and its importance for contemporary life is present in the two *Athens Charters* of the early 30s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This main architectural dichotomy has existed since then and is very prominent in the academic world. Heritage plays multiple functions in contemporary life, but it also depends on the tendencies of fashion and even the MM's works and buildings are embracing heritage titles too, thus promoting the status of these titles. In this sense, Coimbra is somewhere between these two visions of a city's plan. On the one hand, the collective memory has influenced its historic and cultural aspects by creating an image of the city represented by its historic urban landscape. This has been repeatedly reproduced by artists portraying the connection between the university and the city along with its particular cultural academic life. On the other hand, the national political agenda of the regime imposed a *monumental modernism*, to recreate and celebrate the regime itself. This second solution was chosen and the University accepted and defended it, in the 40s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

These urban interventions changed not only the upper town of Coimbra but the entire city also. While in Europe, the city centres were destroyed by bombs during the war, Coimbra was destroyed by the CAPOCUC and *Estado Novo*'s interventions, in order to reconstruct a transnational symbol that should be greater than it seemed, like Le Corbusier's *Voisin Plan* proposed to Paris years before. Coimbra suffered with the demolitions in the *Alta* and its community desperately needed an emotional healing, it was the city's identity and the life of its community that suffered because of the *Estado Novo*'s urban demands. At that time, an international patrimonial title seemed to be the best option to restore the emotional bond between the people and the city. The title did not come immediately but the bond was restored.

It was the UC that, by admitting a sort of *mea culpa* and in order to defend its position as a leader, prepared a WHA to assume the responsibility to preserve, safeguard and protect its material and immaterial legacy, which had always



been an integral part of its relationship with the city. A master plan was drawn up respecting the spatial continuity of the Alta's urban space. The long-awaited result was finally achieved on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June in 2013 and the University of Coimbra – Alta and Sofia was awarded the World Heritage title by UNESCO and its Outstanding Universal Value was recognised.

In this case, a careful analysis of the previous architects' perspectives and projects is necessary in order to understand Coimbra's present layout (Fig. 12). And this application process was one more opportunity to rethink the city that we want for the future, supposing that it will be better than the present one.



Fig. 12 – Lusa Atenas crowned by the UC. (Photo: H Cepeda).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- AAEC 1991, *A Velha Alta desaparecida. Álbum comemorativo das Bodas de Prata da Associação dos Antigos Estudantes de Coimbra*, Almedina, Coimbra.
- Aguiar, J 2009, “Cidade Antiga, Problemas Novos: como a conservação encara(ou) as intervenções em património urbano!”, in *Conferências: Centros Históricos e Vida Contemporânea – 6 Novembro*, IHRU, Lisbon.
- Alçada, M (ed.) 1998, “Universidade de Coimbra”, *Monumentos*, no. 8, MEPAT/ DGEMN, Lisboa. Alçada, M (ed.) 2006, “Coimbra, da Rua da Sofia à Baixa” in *Monumentos*, no. 25, DGEMN, Lisboa.
- Aymonino, C 1984, *O significado das cidades*, Rabaça, A. (transl.), Lisboa: Editorial Presença. (Original 1975) Bandarin, F and Oers, R von 2012, *The historic urban landscape: managing heritage in an urban century*, Wiley-Blackwell.
- Capela, J 2013, “A classificação Património Mundial na problemática disciplinar da arquitectura. O caso de Coimbra”. Paper presented at the *IV Colóquio Internacional de Doutorandos do CES – Coimbra C: dialogar com os tempos e os lugares do(s) mundo(s)*, 6-7 December 2013, FEUC, Coimbra.
- Capela, J & Murtinho, V 2014a, “A World Heritage Application as an opportunity for urban intervention: the case of Coimbra”, in *proceedings of the 18th ICOMOS General Assembly and Scientific Symposium: Heritage and Landscape as Human Values*, 9-14 November 2014, ICOMOS (in press), Florence.

- Capela, J & Murtinho, V 2014b, “Universidade de Coimbra – Alta e Sofia Património Mundial: do designio à realidade”, in *proceedings of the FCSH-UNL Meeting: Patrimonialização e sustentabilidade do património: reflexão e prospectiva*, 27-29 November 2014, FCSH-UNL (in press), Lisbon.
- Carvalho, D 2008, *Monumentality in power: a portuguese case 1926-1974: the University of Coimbra and the construction of national culture*, Daniel Beirão de Carvalho, Delft.
- Choy, F 1965, *L'urbanisme utopies et réalités. Une anthologie*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris.
- Choay, F (ed.) 2002, *La conférence d'Athènes sur la conservation artistique et historique des monuments (1931)*, Les éditions de l'imprimeur.
- Choay, F 2008, *Alegoria do património*, Edições 70, Lisbon.
- Correia, V 1946, *Obras. Volume I. Coimbra*, Por Ordem da Universidade, Coimbra.
- Council of the European Union 2014, *Conclusions on cultural heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe*. Educatio, youth, culture and sport council meeting, Brussels. Available from: <http://www.gr2014.eu/sites/default/files/conclusion%20cultural%20heritage.pdf>. [20 July 2014].
- EDARQ (ed.) 1997, *A Alta de volta: concurso de ideias para o plano de reconversão dos espaços dos Colégios de São Jerónimo, das Artes, Laboratório Químico e área envolvente*, EDARQ, Coimbra.
- Grande, N & Lobo, R (ed.s) 2005, *CidadeSofia – a cidade como território de produção e projecção do saber contemporâneo*. Actas do Seminário Internacional CidadeSofia – Coimbra 2003, EDARQ, Coimbra.
- ICOMOS 1965, “International charter for the conservation and restoration of monuments and sites (The Venice Charter, 1964)”, *Proceedings of II International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments*, ICOMOS, Venice. Available from: <http://www.icomos.org/en/charters-and-other-doctrinal-texts>. [10 October 2014].
- ICOMOS 2011, *The Valletta principles for the safeguarding and management of historic cities, towns and urban areas*, ICOMOS, Paris.
- Instituto dos Arquivos Nacionais/Torre do Tombo (ed.), 1997, *Luís Benavente. Arquitecto*, IAN/TT & Ministério da Cultura, Lisbon.
- Jokilehto, J 2005, *A history of architectural conservation*, PhD Thesis, Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies, University of York, England. Available from: <http://mestrado-reabilitacao.fa.utl.pt/disciplinas/jaguiar/jukkajokilehto1986historyofconservation.pdf>. [10 September 2012].
- Labadi, S & LONG, C (eds) 2010, *Heritage and globalisation*, Routledge, London.
- Le Corbusier n.d., *Urbanisme*, Éditions Vincent, Fréal & Cie, Paris.
- Le Corbusier 1967, *The radiant city*, The Orion Press.
- Le Corbusier 1948, *Concerning town planning*, Yale University Press, New Haven.

- Le Corbusier 1957, *La Charte d'Athènes avec un discours liminaire de Jean Giraudoux suivi de Entretien avec les étudiants des écoles d'Architecture*, Éditions de Minuit, Paris.
- Le Corbusier 1975, *Principios de urbanismo (La Carta de Atenas)*, Editorial Ariel, Barcelona.
- Lopes, NR (ed.) 2012, *University of Coimbra – Alta and Sofia. Executive Summary*, I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, Universidade de Coimbra, Coimbra.
- Lynch, K 1977, *The image of the city*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Murtinho, V 2012, “O dever da memória, o imperativo da renovação”, in *Rua Larga*, no. 36, pp. 8-9, Universidade de Coimbra, Coimbra.
- Oers, R von & Roders, AP 2012, “Historic cities as model of sustainability”, in *Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 4-14, Emerald Group Publishing Limited. Available from: [www.emeraldinsight.com/2044-1266.htm](http://www.emeraldinsight.com/2044-1266.htm). [05 December 2014].
- Pimentel, AF 2005, *A morada da sabedoria. O Paço Real de Coimbra das origens ao estabelecimento da Universidade*, Almedina, Coimbra.
- Rosmaninho, N 2006, *O poder da arte – o Estado Novo e a Cidade Universitária de Coimbra*, Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra, Coimbra.
- Rossa, W 2001, *Diversidade urbanografia do espaço de Coimbra até ao estabelecimento definitivo da universidade*, PhD Thesis, Department of Architecture, Faculty of Sciences and Technology of University of Coimbra, Coimbra.
- Salazar, AO 1945, *Discursos e notas políticas II 1935-1937*, Coimbra Editora Lda, Coimbra.
- Sarmiento, M n. d., *Relatório, anuário da Universidade de Coimbra (1940-1941)*, Universidade de Coimbra, Coimbra.
- Serra, JR (ed.) 1990, *Il concetto di centro storico. Ricerca archeologica, recupero, conservazione, riuso, protezione dei Beni Culturali*, Guerini Studio, Milão.
- Torgal, LR 1999, *A Universidade e o Estado Novo – o caso de Coimbra 1926-1961*, Minerva, Coimbra. UNESCO, *Documents*, UNESCO. Available from: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/documents/>. [10 November 2013].
- UNESCO 1972, *Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage 1972*, UNESCO, Paris. Available from: [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=13055&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13055&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html). [26 September 2014].
- UNESCO 2012, *Records of the General Conference, 36<sup>th</sup> session, Paris, 25 October – 10 November 2011. Volume 1. Resolutions*, UNESCO, Paris. Available from: [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=48857&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=48857&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html). [19 February 2015].

UNESCO & WHC 2013, *WHC-13/37.COM/20: Convention concerning the protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*. Decisions adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its 37th session (Phnom Penh, 2013), World Heritage Committee, UNESCO, Paris. Available from: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/37COM/>. [29 July 2013].

Zevi, B 1973, *História da Arquitectura Moderna*, Arcádia, Lisbon.